

W H Y C O L L E G E S T U D E N T S F A I L

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SUMMARY

A high percentage of those entering college fail to fulfill the requirements for graduation. A study of some of the reasons for this will lead to steps that may improve this condition.

Two of the greatest reasons are, in my opinion: (1) the lack of incentive to work; and (2) the improper choice of course.

Three suggestions that may, to some extent, reduce this failure are: (1) the publication of guidance literature by the school; (2) a more effective guidance and counseling system; and (3) more emphasis on rewards for good scholarship.

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In the University of Maryland, according to a study made by the registrar, Miss Preinkert, of the class of 1932, the average student mortality is fifty-seven per cent, that is, fifty-seven per cent of the students entering in 1928 did not graduate in 1932. A study made by the United States Department of the Interior shows that this mortality is sixty-eight per cent for an average of twenty-five schools. It should be of interest to the University and organizations such as Tau Beta Pi to know why such a large proportion of students fail. To attribute it to "dumbness" or "laziness" is to evade the problem. I believe that there are definite causes and that an honest attempt to remedy them would produce not only a larger percentage, but a better quality of graduates.

LACK OF INCENTIVE TO WORK

In my opinion, failure in enough subjects to cause loss of class standing or dismissal from school is effected by two basic factors, the first of which being by far the more important. It is the LACK OF INCENTIVE TO WORK AND TO LEARN or, in other words, placing of study in a relatively unimportant place in the student's schedule of activities. This factor in turn has a number of causes. They are as follows:

(1.) The lack of a genuine interest in the course pursued. This leads many young people with real ability to try to do as little as possible and still get by; only too often they do not get by.

(2.) Students coming to college too young and without the realization of the value of a college education in the outside world. Of course, some types of people do very well when coming into college after an early graduation from high school, but from my observation, those that stayed out

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of school a year or more between high school and college have consistently achieved far greater success in college. They have a deep impression of the meaning of an education in getting and holding a good job.

(3.) The common idea that college is the place to enjoy the best time of one's life and that studies are the side issue to be pursued only when time from other activities permits. This presents a most difficult problem in the case of registrants from wealthy homes as they see little need for working.

IMPROPER CHOICE OF COURSE

The second major reason has received far more attention from university authorities than the first. It is as follows: IMPROPER CHOICE OF COURSE WITH REGARD TO ABILITY AND APTITUDE. It is a recognized fact that many people can learn one type of subject much more easily than they can another. A common example of this is the difference between such subjects as mathematics and history. One who does well in one of these often does not care for the other. Consequently a freshman who has made an unwise choice will be unlikely to succeed unless a change is made. It is also an obvious fact that there are some people who are admitted to college who just have low ability. It has been found that such students can often get along in courses of the descriptive type rather than the abstract, i. e. geology, zoology and botany rather than physics, chemistry or mathematics. Supposedly the entrance requirements would prohibit anyone who was absolutely unable to pass this type of course.

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE REDUCTION OF MORTALITY

To remedy some of these situations is next to impossible. Others, I believe, can be greatly improved by (1) the publication of literature by

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the university concerning the requirements for probable success in college,
(2) a more effective guidance and counseling system than is usually practiced and (3) more emphasis on rewards for scholastic achievement.

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